



H.RES. 698 – COMMEMORATING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 698 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative James Walsh (R-NY) on October 1, 2007. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, but was never considered.

H.Res. 698 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on March 4, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 698 resolves that on the 200th anniversary of the founding of Congressional Cemetery, the House of Representatives recognizes and honors the cultural and historical importance of Congressional Cemetery and the value of protecting and restoring the cemetery.

BACKGROUND

The Congressional Cemetery was founded in 1807 near the banks of the Anacostia River in the District of Columbia, and was first called the Washington Parish Burial Ground. The Congressional Cemetery was unofficially considered to be the District's and America's first national cemetery. The Congressional Cemetery predates Arlington National Cemetery by 70 years.

Congress was the primary developer of the Congressional Cemetery, and appropriated funds for the road gradation, fencing, the construction of a public vault and the original gatehouse to the Cemetery. In the early 1830's, Congress began to refer to the Cemetery as the Congressional Cemetery. Senator Uriah Tracy of Connecticut was the first burial to take place at the Cemetery. Senator Tracy died in Washington on July 19, 1807, and was interred the next day.

Today, 19 Senators and 71 Representatives are interred at the Congressional Cemetery, along with over 55,000 individuals in 30,000 burial sites marked by 14,000 headstones. Persons interred at the Cemetery include Vice Presidents George Clinton and Elbridge Gerry, 10 mayors of Washington, and J. Edgar Hoover.

The Cemetery was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on June 23, 1969, and was named as one of the 11 most endangered historical sites in America on June 16, 1997 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Cemetery has been managed by the nonprofit Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery for over 30 years.

STAFF CONTACT

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